

The Family

SONG OF THE MYSTIC.

I walk down the valley of Silence—
Down the dim, voiceless valley—alone,
And I hear not the fall of a footstep
Around me save God's and my own;
And the hush of my heart is as holy
As hovers where angels have flown.

Long ago was I weary of voices
Whose music my heart could not win;
Long ago was I weary of noises
That fretted my soul with their din:
Long ago was I weary of places
Where I met but the human—and sin.

I walked in the world with the worldly;
I craved what the world never gave;
And I said: "In the world each ideal
That shines like a star on life's wave
Is wrecked on the shores of the Real
And sleeps like a dream in a grave."

And still did I pine for the Perfect
And still found the False with the
True;
I sought 'mid the Human for Heaven,
But caught a mere glimpse of its blue;
And I wept when the clouds of the Mortal
Veiled even that glimpse from my view.

And I toiled on heart-tired of the Human
And I moaned 'mid the mazes of men
Till I knelt, long ago, at an altar
And I heard a voice call me. Since then
I walk down the Valley of Silence
That lies far beyond Mortal ken.

Do you ask what I found in the Valley?
'Tis my Trysting-Place with the Divine.
And I fell at the feet of the Holy
And above me a voice said: "Be mine."
And there arose from the depths of my Spirit
An echo—"My heart shall be thine."

Do you ask how I live in the Valley?
I weep—and I dream—and I pray,
But my tears are as sweet as the dew-drops
That fall on the roses in May;
And my prayer like a perfume from censers
Ascendeth to God night and day.

And I have seen thoughts in the Valley—
Ah me! how my spirit was stirred!
And they wear holy veils on their faces,
Their footsteps can scarcely be heard;
They pass through the Valley like Virgins,
Too pure for the touch of a word.

Do you ask me the place of the Valley,
Ye hearts that are harrowed by Care?
It lieth afar between mountains
And God and His angels are there:
And one is the dark Mount of Sorrow,
And one the bright Mountain of Prayer.
—Father Ryan.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

The Youth's Companion prints the following story, which a good many people, young and old, might read with profit.

Lillian felt a glow of pride and pleasure in her success at the guessing-game in which some of the older guests in the summer hotel had invited her to join. "We can't expect to match our wits with a girl just out of high school," said one of the party, with a kind smile at Lillian. "We might have known that she would recognize Boswell as the Englishman whose claim to fame rested upon a biography."

"And she knew that it was Pepys who chronicles small beer and great historical events in the same cryptic pages," added a gray-haired gentleman. "But if you will leave the room again, Miss Lillian, we'll try to find a character that won't be so easy for you."

When Lillian was recalled she was told that the person she was to guess was a leader, a lawmaker, and a wonder-worker, and celebrated for his meekness. After a few moments' thought she owned herself mystified. "He had stone tables," a lady suggested.

"Was it Hadrian?" Lillian asked. "He had lots of marble furniture."

"Ours is an Old Testament character," remarked the gray-haired gentleman, smiling, "and he passed forty days on a mount." Even this hint did not enlighten Lillian. "I'll have to give up," she said. "Moses!" merily chorused all the players.

"Moses!" repeated Lillian. "Why, did Moses preach the Sermon on the Mount?" The merriment died out of most of the elderly faces, and was replaced by a grave expression that made Lillian uncomfortable. "Have I said something wrong?" she whispered to Mrs. Dorsey, her chaperon.

"I think, dear, we are all pained to find you don't know who preached the Sermon on the Mount," was the gentle reply.

A few minutes later Lillian answered a tap at the door of her own room and Mrs. Dorsey entered. "I thought when I missed you that maybe you were here alone," she said, and then, noticing Lillian's tear-stained face, "Why, my child, you mustn't be unhappy."

"I can't help it. I know every one in the parlor was shocked at my ignorance about the Bible."

"Perhaps your ignorance is not altogether your fault. The Bible isn't taught as it used to be. In my early days it was considered an important part of education, and I think the present almost total neglect of it in the home and school is a sad mistake. Aside from the great religious and ethical value of a knowledge of it, a familiarity with the Bible is necessary for good understanding of literature. Do you know why Mrs. Wharton named her novel 'The House of Mirth'?"

"No," answered Lillian.

"Then search the Book of Ecclesiastes. Do you know why Mrs. Deland called a story 'Many Waters'?"

"No: I read it, and couldn't see any sense to the title."

"That was because you didn't read 'Solomon's Song.' These two names happened to occur to me now, and as you become better acquainted with the Bible, you will see what fulness and richness it has given to nearly all our literature."

"Well, I intend to become acquainted with it," said Lillian. And she wrote home that night and asked her father to send her mother's Bible.

A TRUE STORY.

Some years ago a young man came from the West to Pittsburg as a student. He did not know a solitary human being in either of the "Twin Cities." At his boarding house he was asked where he thought of going to church. He mentioned the place he had chosen, not because he knew anybody there, but because it was near at hand. "Well," the questioner replied, "they will soon freeze you out from that congregation." "I'll give them a chance to welcome me, anyway," was the rejoinder. "I don't believe they are as cold as you think."

The next Sunday morning found the student waiting in the vestibule for an usher to show him a seat. All of them were busy at the time, and the young man waited—did not run out of the door—just waited until some one had had a fair chance to notice him. After a while he felt a little squeeze of his arm from somebody behind. He turned and was confronted by a rather stout gentleman of strong but kindly features. There was but one word of inquiry—"Stranger?" "Yes, sir," the young man replied. "Come with me to my seat." "Stranger" obeyed. Shortly after two ladies entered the same pew. Not a word was spoken until after the benediction. Then the stout gentleman uttered another interrogatory word, "Student?" "Yes, sir," was the reply. "Come and take dinner with me." (Aside: "What's your name?") "This lady is my mother, and this, my sister. Here, let me introduce you to one of our elders, and here comes the pastor, Dr. Cox. Say, Mr. Shelly (a deacon) come over here; here's a new friend I have just found; we want him to get acquainted. Now let's start for home." (On the way): "Sing?" "A little—not very much—just enough, I guess." Come up to our mission Sunday-school after dinner and help us, will you? I am superintendent." "Sure."

That day was the beginning of three years of happy acquaintance and helpful social intercourse with as cordial a congregation as ever assembled in any church.

The young man found that the best place of all to extend his acquaintance was the mid-week prayer-meeting, which invariably ended up in a "chatter" after dismissal. The young man might have shot out of the door the instant the benediction was pronounced, but it seemed to him to be only fair treatment of the church people to give them a chance to approach him. Some of the members were a little backward, of course, and